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## Saddam hospitalized due to hunger strike

Updated 7/24/2006 11 20 AM ET

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By Chris Hondros, AP

Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein holds a copy of the Quran as he sits in his chair during his trial Feb. 14, 2006 in Baghdad. Hussein was hospitalized Sunday on the 17th day of a hunger strike, the chief prosecutor in his trial said.

BAGHDAD (AP) — Saddam Hussein was hospitalized Sunday and fed with a tube on the 17th day of a hunger strike to ensure he was healthy enough to continue with his trial, the chief prosecutor said. The procedure came as the ex-leader's troubled trial nears a verdict that could lead to his hanging.

Prosecutor Jaafar al-Moussawi said he learned that Saddam's health had become "unstable because of the hunger strike" during a visit to the U.S.-run prison where the former ruler and his seven fellow defendants are held.

"We took him to the hospital, and he is being currently fed by a tube," al-Moussawi told The Associated Press without elaboration.

**VIDEO:** Saddam is hospitalized

Al-Moussawi said the feeding tube had stabilized Saddam's health and the former president would appear in court as scheduled this week. Saddam was not scheduled to appear Monday when the trial resumes after a two-week break, because other defendants are to give their final summations.

It appeared that al-Moussawi had become concerned over the impact of televised pictures of a frail, weakened Saddam appearing in court and decided to check on the ex-president himself since the Americans were continuing to insist that a 69-year-old man's health was unaffected despite two weeks without food.

The hunger strike was launched to demand better security for the defense team. Three of them have been assassinated since

the trial began, most recently Khamis al-Obeidi, who was abducted and slain June 21.

The defense rejected an offer of the same security provided to the judges and prosecution lawyers: residence inside the Green Zone, the fortified Baghdad neighborhood where the court is located. Instead, they wanted bodyguards.

Saddam and the seven others have been on trial since Oct. 19 for the deaths of Shiite Muslims after a crackdown in the town of Dujail, which was launched after an assassination attempt there in 1982. They could receive the death penalty if convicted.

But Saddam's lawyer Khalil al-Dulaimi said none of the defendants or their lawyers would appear Monday unless the court "meets the minimum requirement ensuring a fair trial for the defendants."

Al-Dulaimi told The Associated Press that Saddam was "in high spirits and his health very good" despite the hunger strike.

U.S. officials had acknowledged that Saddam and three other detainees were refusing food since the evening meal of July 7 but were drinking coffee and sweet tea. The Americans insisted that Saddam was still in good health despite two weeks without food, and that he had been advised by "medical professionals" of the dangers of not eating.

A spokesman for the U.S. detention command would not say whether Saddam had been hospitalized but said he was under medical supervision and was "voluntarily" taking nutrients through a feeding tube.

"He's continuing to refuse meals," Lt. Col. Keir-Kevin Curry said. "He remains in coalition care and custody, and we're providing appropriate medical care."

U.S. officials have not identified the others who were refusing food, but defense lawyers said they are co-defendants Barzan Ibrahim, Saddam's half brother; former Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan; and Awad al-Bandar.

The defense team blamed al-Obeidi's killing on Shiite militiamen and announced it would boycott the trial in protest over the lack of security.

In a letter to the court, the defense said it wanted U.S. authorities to provide security for the lawyers and their families. It also demanded a 45-day recess to allow it to prepare closing statements and as much time as they want to present final arguments.

Chief Judge Raouf Abdel-Rahman suspended the proceedings July 11 and warned that if the defense did not appear Monday, he would appoint other attorneys to make the final summations.

DEFENSE EXHIBIT EF Identification

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Al-Bandar and Ramadan were to make final arguments Monday, followed by Saddam and Barzan. The four other lawyers have already presented their summations. Following summations, the trial will be suspended while the five-judge panel deliberates a verdict.

The verdict is expected by mid-August. Saddam is also due to stand trial Aug. 21 for a crackdown against the Kurds in the 1980s during which an estimated 100,000 Kurds were killed.

Security had been a contentious issue even before the current trial began. Some human rights organizations had questioned whether a fair trial could be held in a country wracked by bombings, killings and armed insurgency — some of it fanned by the former president's supporters.

U.S. and Iraqi officials brushed off such criticism and insisted that Saddam should face justice before his own people for the suffering caused by his totalitarian regime.

But the trial has been dogged by other problems, including boisterous behavior by Saddam and his half brother. The first chief judge, Rizgar Mohammed Amin, stepped down in January after complaints of political interference and criticism that he failed to control the proceedings.

Abdel-Rahman has been strict with the defendants and lawyers, throwing some of them out of court on occasion and ordering Barzan silenced for speaking without permission.

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Posted 7/23/2006 8:56 AM ET

Updated 7/24/2006 11:20 AM ET

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## Hunger-strike Hussein in hospital

Sunday, July 23, 2006; Posted: 12:33 p.m. EDT (16:33 GMT)

**BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) -- Former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein has been taken to the hospital after suffering from the effects of a hunger strike, launched in protest of his ongoing trial, the chief prosecutor in his trial said.**

U.S. military spokesman Lt. Col. Keir-Kevin Curry said the 69-year-old Hussein voluntarily received nutrition through a feeding tube, and continues to be monitored. He is continuing his hunger strike and his life is not in danger, Curry said.

After hearing the report, Hussein's defense attorney Mohamed Moneib questioned whether the hunger strike was to blame, saying Hussein was in "very, very good health" on Saturday during a three-hour meeting in Baghdad.

"He discussed a lot of issues with us, pitched ideas and even discussed the Israeli aggression on Lebanon," Moneib said. "There was no indication that he is ill or suffered of poor health."

Hussein and three other defendants have been refusing food since the beginning of the month to protest the proceedings and to push for better security for defense lawyers, three of whom have been killed since the trial began in October.

Though a military spokesman said Hussein has been drinking coffee with sugar and water with nutrients, the former Iraqi leader has refused all meals since July 7.

Hussein's refusal to eat marks the third time he has gone on a hunger strike since last October, when the trial began.

Curry said the hunger strikers are monitored regularly and evaluated daily.

Moneib told CNN that Hussein's hospitalization was a dangerous development, voicing his concern that it might be an attempt by the Iraqi High Tribunal to keep the former Iraqi leader away from the trial proceedings.

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Saddam Hussein pictured during his trial at a court in Baghdad

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Shortly after their clients began their hunger strike, the defense team submitted a list of demands to the Iraqi High Tribunal on July 8, including an unlimited number of defense lawyers to present closing arguments and unlimited time to speak without interruption, no matter what they are talking about.

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Iraqi High Tribunal's Raed Juhi said he responded to the demands on July 10, saying the court follows procedural laws that allot time for attorneys to speak, but limits their comments to case and defense-related arguments.

But Moneib said the court ignored their list of demands, prompting the entire defense team to resume its boycott of the trial, scheduled to resume Monday.

"Our defense (closing arguments) is ready and we are ready to attend at any moment as soon as our legal demands are fulfilled," Moneib said.

"The minimum we would accept is allowing the defense to present all that we have without interruptions and time limits -- this should apply to the lawyers and the clients."

Hussein is being tried on charges related to the killings of more than 140 males in the town of Dujail in 1982 after a failed assassination attempt against him.

### Latest violence

Meanwhile on Sunday, at least 50 people were killed and 165 wounded when two car bombers targeted a Kirkuk city courthouse and a busy Baghdad market.

The first suicide car bomb exploded at 9 a.m., ripping open a packed open-air market in the Sadr City section of eastern Baghdad, Baghdad police said; 32 were killed and 65 were wounded.

The suicide bomber was driving a minibus and detonated the bomb after picking up commuters at the entrance of the market in the densely populated Shiite neighborhood, said an Iraqi who saw the bomb. The explosion was so powerful the witness said he was blown backwards from 150 meters away.

Video from the scene show survivors rushing the wounded out of the blast site while some lingered, crying over pools of blood in the street. The footage also showed several cars, trucks and vans destroyed in the blast, many of them sprayed with shrapnel.

The second car bomb exploded near the courthouse in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, killing at least 18 people and wounding 100, Kirkuk police said.

The blast ignited an intense fire that hampered rescue efforts.

South of the capital, U.S. soldiers killed 15 "terrorists" in a three-hour firefight in Babil province, the U.S. military said.

An Iraqi soldier was also killed in the fighting, which began in Musayyib.

Meanwhile the U.S. military said Saturday an American soldier was killed when his convoy was hit by a roadside bomb in eastern Baghdad.

Another soldier died from a "non-combat related injury" Thursday and military investigators are looking into the incident, the U.S. military said Saturday.

The number of U.S. military fatalities in the Iraq war now stands at 2,560.

### PM: Lebanon issue 'dangerous'

Also Saturday Iraq's prime minister, whose country is mired in Sunni-Shiite sectarian fighting and a relentless insurgent violence, said he wanted to put another conflict on his busy agenda next week when he meets

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with the Bush administration and other officials -- Lebanon.

Nuri al-Maliki -- who spoke to reporters in a press conference after the first meeting of the Higher Commission for Dialogue and National Reconciliation -- said he would discuss the conflict with the United Nations and the U.S. government during his trip.

Al-Maliki said he would urge the speeding up of a cease-fire and the implementation of International resolutions.

**Iraqis inspect wrecked car at site of explosion in Sadr City.**

Image:



"We have a new and dangerous issue: the military and security situation that came as a result of the Israeli attacks and raids on Lebanon and the destruction of

infrastructure and the bombing of water, electricity and airports and what the Lebanese people are living and how it could affect the situation in the region," al-Maliki said.

Al-Maliki, noting that the trip had been planned for some time, said the Iraqi delegation would be focused on the importance of building of Iraqi security forces and security that "would lead to reconstruction, rebuilding and services."

But al-Maliki's comments on Lebanon reflect the political complexities and priorities in the region.

Al-Maliki's government is an ally of the United States and relies on U.S. security for its existence.

However, his words on the conflict in Lebanon are at odds with the Bush administration's support of Israel's fight against the Hezbollah guerrilla network in Lebanon.

Al-Maliki, a Shiite who had been in exile in Syria during the Saddam Hussein era, represents a government dominated by Shiites, who number 60 percent of Iraqis.

Hezbollah is a Shiite Muslim movement and it has support across the Shiite world, including the huge Shiite population in Iraq.

Some Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan, have questioned the wisdom of Hezbollah's raid into Israel that sparked the Israeli offensive in Lebanon. They are largely Sunni nations.

But al-Maliki joins other leaders across the Muslim world -- both Shiite and Sunni -- who have solely laid the blame on Israel in the conflict.

Also Saturday, around 2,000 demonstrators marched from Sadr City to a square near the headquarters of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a Shiite group, to protest "Israeli acts of terror on the Lebanese people" and to express solidarity with the Lebanese people.

*CNN's Nicky Robertson, Jomana Karadsheh and Arwa Damon contributed to this report.*

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# Saddam Hussein, three co-defendants are on hunger strike

Updated 7/12/2006 5:53 PM ET

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By David Furst AP

Former Baath Party official Abdullah Ruwayyid presents final arguments during a trial held in Baghdad Tuesday. Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and three co-defendants are on a hunger strike.

## SADDAM ON TRIAL

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Saddam: Can't we all get along?

Blair opposes death penalty

**Graphic:** Saddam's rise and fall

## The Associated Press

Saddam Hussein and three of his co-defendants have been on a hunger strike for nearly a week to protest what the defense says is a lack of security for their attorneys, the U.S. military said Wednesday.

Lawyers for Saddam and co-defendants Barzan Ibrahim, Taha Hussein Ramadan and Awad al-Bandaron announced a boycott of the proceedings this week unless their demands were met for greater security after one of their colleagues was killed last month.

Saddam and the three others "have now refused meals since their evening meal on July 7," Lt. Col. Keir-Kevin Curry, spokesman for U.S. military detainee operations, told the Associated Press in an e-mail.

"All are protesting the Iraqi High Tribunal procedures and security for the defense attorneys," he said.

The four defendants were in "good health and receiving appropriate medical care," with access to physicians at all time, he said, adding that more medical attention will be focused on those detainees who continue to refuse meals.

"Saddam has participated in various hunger strikes during his detention, but his health has never been in danger," Curry said.

The judge called a two-week recess in Saddam's trial on Tuesday and warned the defense attorneys that if they did not attend the next session, court-appointed lawyers would make Saddam's closing arguments.

The defense walkout was sparked by the June 21 slaying of Khamis al-Obeidi, the third member of the team to be assassinated since the trial began last October. The defense team has blamed Shiite militiamen for al-Obeidi's death.

In a letter to the court, the defense said it wanted U.S. authorities to provide security for the lawyers and their families. It also demanded a 45-day recess to allow it to prepare its

closing statements and a promise from the court that it would be allowed to take as long as it wishes in its final arguments.

Court spokesman Raid Juhi said the defense had rejected an offer of the same security precaution given to the judges and prosecution lawyers: residence inside the Green Zone, the fortified Baghdad neighborhood where the court is located.

It was not clear if the adjournment until July 24 will mean a delay in the issuing of verdicts in the 9-month-old trial. Court officials had predicted the verdicts would come in mid-August.

Saddam and seven former members of his regime are charged in the crackdown on Shiites in the town of Dujail following a 1982 assassination attempt against the Iraqi leader.

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Posted 7/12/2006 5:50 PM ET

Updated 7/12/2006 5:53 PM ET

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## Chiefs out to solve State-army impasse

(Tuesday, November 21, 2006)

Fiji's Great Council of Chiefs remains confident of resolving the long-standing impasse because it "trusts in the good judgement" of military commander Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama and Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase.

In a statement yesterday, Council chairman Ratu Ovini Bokini said the GCC mediation committee had equal respect and faith in the two leaders.

"The committee trusts in the good judgment of the two leaders in coming together to resolve the impasse," Ratu Ovini said.

"The mediation committee appreciates the confirmation of the military's participation and is expecting to receive the military officers as agreed."

Ratu Ovini has also called on stakeholders to exercise good judgment and refrain from spreading irresponsible rumours and speculation during this time of uncertainty.

Commodore Bainimarama could not be reached for a comment.

Unconfirmed reports yesterday said Commodore Bainimarama would leave for New Zealand this morning.

However, military spokesman Major Neumi Leweni has denied any knowledge of the trip and refused to comment on the army's version of a "clean up campaign" which will reportedly target the Government.

In an interview with Fiji One News on Sunday, Commodore Bainimarama commented on the planned campaign.

When asked if the clean-up meant a coup, he denied it.

Further, Commodore Bainimarama said he would not meet with the GCC mediation team, Mr Qarase nor Police Commissioner Andrew Hughes.

A team of senior army officers was instead tasked to meet the mediation team which includes a lawyer, an academic and a psychotherapist.

He said his team was compiling some documents which would be presented to the mediators when they meet but no date has been disclosed.



Commodore Bainimarama explained that his absence on the first day of a special GCC meeting in Suva was because he saw no use in attending.

He said some members of the GCC were the very ones who supported the 2000 coup and, as such, he felt it would have been a waste of time for him to explain the military's stand to such people.

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## Fiji's Slow March Toward a Military Takeover

Sanjay Ramesh, Sydney, Australia, December 11, 2006

On Nov. 13, the Fiji Military Forces (F.M.F.) came up with a list of demands for the government. In a letter to Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, the army put forward the following demands:

- Public declaration by the government that the coups of 2000 were illegal. All those associated with them must be removed from office.
- Withdrawal of three contentious bills: The Racial Tolerance and Unity bill, the Qoliqoli bill and the Land Claims Tribunal bill.
- Investigations against Commodore Frank Bainimarama and senior army officers terminated.
- Police Commissioner Andrew Hughes contract terminated.
- No foreign intervention under the Biketawa Declaration of 2000.
- Disband the armed Police Tactical Response Unit.
- Review the commercial arm of the Native Land Trust Board (N.L.T.B.): the Vanua Development Corporation.
- Ministry of Home Affairs address RFMF concerns about force structure, allowances and promotions.
- Government of Fiji to institute good governance.

The chain of events that started with Bainimarama's independence day speech saw the army and the government caught in a dangerous standoff. Police Commissioner Andrew Hughes was drawn into this ongoing conflict after he refused to release the ammunitions that had arrived for the army at Suva harbor (*The Fiji Times*, Oct. 30). Under Schedule 5 of the Fiji Arms and Ammunitions Act, only the police commissioner can issue import licenses for any arms importations. On the morning of Nov. 1, heavily armed soldiers boarded the vessel and took possession of the ammunitions. However, there is a 1969 ordinance that exempts the military from seeking police approval.

On Oct. 31, Prime Minister Qarase sought audience with the Vice President Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi and a decision was made to change command at the Queen Elizabeth Barracks at Nabua (*Fijilive*). Lt. Col. Meli Saubulinayau was summoned to the president's office with orders to take over as the new commander of the F.M.F. However, Col. Subulinayau declined, stating that he did not have the support of the army. With Commodore Bainimarama away in the Middle East, Land Forces Commander Pita Driti, Acting Commander Esala Teleni and military spokesperson Maj. Neumi Leweni expressed deep concern over government moves to oust Bainimarama.

On Nov. 1, Qarase convened a National Security Council meeting, threatening that his government would resign if Bainimarama stayed on. The Police Tactical Squad guarded government buildings as Fiji's Pacific neighbors, Australia and New Zealand, upgraded travel warnings and sent warships and personnel for a possible evacuation of their citizens (*AAP*, Nov. 1). Meanwhile, the Fiji police came out with a press release confirming that investigations had started against Bainimarama for his outbursts against the government (*The Fiji Sun*, Nov. 1).

Bainimarama arrived in the country on Nov. 4 and remained silent over the events that transpired during his absence. The police, nevertheless, continued to press ahead.

With the police waiting to interview Bainimarama, the army lashed out at Australia for getting involved in Fijian affairs after Australian Defense Force chief, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, called on Bainimarama not to carry out his threat to force the resignation of Prime Minister Qarase's government. (*Fijilive*, Nov. 5). In addition, the F.M.F. alleged that Australia had covertly sent a Special Air Services team on Nov. 3 to Fiji to carry out reconnaissance for a possible "invasion" (*The Fiji Times*, Nov. 8). These allegations were strenuously refuted by the Australian High Commission media liaison officer, Matt Anderson.

On Nov. 7, the military called on the police commissioner to resign (*The Fiji Times*, Nov. 8) as the political drama unfolding in Suva shifted to the Great Council of Chiefs (G.C.C.), which met on Nov. 9 at the request of Prime Minister Qarase. On Nov. 8, Bainimarama broke silence and accused Qarase of lying.

"Let me say that corruption is about lies and in the indigenous context the greatest lie is when it is told by a P.M., a *talatala* [preacher] or a chief for personal gain for the simple reason that these are the three entities that we hold dear and look up to for advice ... This was seen in 2000 in parliament when people in positions of leadership in our society lied to the people of this nation that George Speight was correct in all senses of the word when we knew that these were losers and opportunists jostling for positions and money.

"We in the R.F.M.F. represent the silent majority of this land and say we are tired of being lied to. Stop now or our children and grandchildren will suffer" (*The Fiji Sun*, Nov. 9).

Bainimarama boycotted the first day of the G.C.C. meeting, arguing that Qarase's move to bring in the high chiefs was a poor judgment on the part of the prime minister. On Nov. 10, Bainimarama addressed the chiefs and expressed personal disappointment with the leadership of Qarase. In response to the crisis, the G.C.C. formed a six member mediation committee, which was expected to report to the G.C.C. meeting in Levuka Dec. 12-14 (*Islands Business*, Nov. 10). The two day G.C.C. meeting passed seven resolutions:

The Bose Levu Vakaturaga (G.C.C.) remains committed to supporting at all times the legally elected government; the Bose Levu Vakaturaga upholds the role of Parliament in its law making process as stipulated in the Constitution; the Bose Levu Vakaturaga upholds the rule of law, respect for democracy as well as customary laws and strongly urges all citizens to respect, abide and protect these at all times; the Bose Levu Vakaturaga urges the two leaders to communicate and resolve their differences; the Bose Levu Vakaturaga has resolved that a committee chaired by the chairperson of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga with three members representing the three confederacies and two advisers to facilitate the mediation process between government and the military, as part of its term of reference, the committee will study the underlying causes of the strained relations which have developed between government and the Fiji Military Forces and the projected ultimate results of such serious strained relations (*The Fiji Times*, Nov. 11)

As both the F.M.F. and the government started the next phase of their maneuvers, it was becoming clear that both sides were dug in and not giving an inch. The minister for home affairs, Josefa Vosanibola, warned that the commodore was not above the law and should not be making any demands on an elected government (*Fijilive*, Nov. 16). On Nov. 19, Bainimarama told Fiji TV that the government was wrong to involve chiefs in the standoff between the military and the government and argued that most of the chiefs in the G.C.C. were involved in the 2000 coup and could not be "honest brokers." Bainimarama further criticized the government for attempting to oust him from office while he was overseas (*The Fiji Daily Post*, Nov. 20).

Bainimarama warned that if the Racial Tolerance and Unity, Qoliqoli and Lands Claim Tribunal bills were passed, the national security situation would deteriorate (*The Fiji Daily Post*, Nov. 16). On Nov. 19, Bainimarama questioned the appointment of a psychiatrist, Selina Kuruleca, as an advisor to the special committee of the G.C.C. (*Fiji Village News*). On Nov. 20, Bainimarama gave two weeks notice to the government to acquiesce to his demands, warning that he would "clean up" the government himself (Fiji TV). On Nov. 21, Bainimarama flew to Auckland to attend the christening of his grand daughter. At Auckland airport, journalists, without success, sought clarification from Bainimarama on his "clean up" campaign (*Fairfax*).

Back in Fiji, Police Commissioner Hughes revealed on Nov. 23 that five senior officers including the commodore were likely to be charged with sedition. On the same day, police officers armed with summonses went and confiscated documents relating to the army from the office of the president (Fijilive, Nov. 25). In the ABC *Lateline* program the same night, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, expressed new fears that a coup would occur within weeks (ABC, Nov. 24).

Word reached Bainimarama in New Zealand that the office of the president was searched by the police. He reacted angrily, arguing that a foreigner had violated the office of the president by not following traditional Fijian protocols and ordered Police Commissioner Hughes out of the country (Fijilive, Nov. 25).

Armed soldiers in full battle gear began patrolling the streets of Suva on Nov. 25. On Nov. 27, the New Zealand High Commission in Suva closed its doors and advised its citizens to leave Fiji. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs also made similar calls as fears of a coup escalated (*Fiji Village News*). Prime Minister Qarase called on citizens to work together and the home affairs minister reiterated that demands by the commodore to drop all investigations against him was contrary to the rule of law (Fijilive).

In a bid to thwart a coup, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs organized a Forum Foreign Ministers' meeting in Sydney on Dec. 1. Fiji TV on Nov. 27 reported that Qarase requested assistance from regional Pacific island states under the Biketawa Declaration. There was growing nervousness among government members as well as consular officials in Suva after a thousand members of the territorial forces were recalled to the army camp.

On Nov. 28, *The Fiji Times* reported that an arrest order was out for Commodore Bainimarama and that two police officers went to New Zealand to seek assistance from Interpol. The *Fiji Village News* reported that the police commissioner had moved his family to Australia and changed residence for security reasons (Nov. 28). Commissioner Hughes told Radio New Zealand that there was a real and credible threat from the army barracks to arrest him (*The Age*, Nov. 28). Meanwhile, Britain joined Australia and New Zealand in upgrading its travel warning (BBC, Nov. 27).

Rumors circulated that Bainimarama would place government ministers and the police commissioner under house arrest after arriving back in Fiji. Feeding the rumors was the apparent breakdown in the progress toward a multiparty governance framework. On Wednesday, Nov. 22, four Fiji Labor Party (F.L.P.) cabinet ministers voted against the 1997 budget. The F.L.P. leader, Mahendra Chaudhry, had warned earlier that all nine F.L.P. cabinet ministers must be present for the vote. However, five members were granted leave of absence by Prime Minister Qarase. Chaudhry was unhappy after the budget passed with 40 votes in favor and 26 against. On Friday, Nov. 24, Qarase came up with a compromise, which was rejected by Chaudhry. Qarase proposed that he would allow the four F.L.P. cabinet ministers to stay provided the F.L.P. did not take disciplinary action against the other five. Adding to the multiparty woes was the outburst by F.L.P. cabinet minister Lekh Ram Vayeshnoi, who attacked the police for raiding the president's office on Nov. 23 (Fiji TV, Nov. 27). On Nov. 28, three F.L.P. members, 'Atu Bain, Prem Chand and Vijay Singh, and two cabinet ministers, Krishna Datt and Poseci Bune, were expelled from the party (*The Fiji Daily Post*, Nov. 29). The fate of three other cabinet ministers, Adi Sivia Qoro, Gyani Nand and Dr Gunasagaran Goundar, was yet to be determined by the F.L.P. caucus (*Fijilive*).

Oxford academic Victor Lal argued that the government should acquiesce to the military's demands and urged the president to take a leadership role in resolving the crisis. If there was no consensus between the government and the army, then Lal suggested that the president suspend Parliament for three to six months and seek resolution between the disputing parties with a help of advisors (*The Fiji Sun*, Nov. 28).

The New Zealand government attempted to broker a peace deal, following private discussions on the security situation in Fiji between New Zealand's minister for foreign affairs, Winston Peters, and Commodore Bainimarama in Wellington. On Nov. 28, Prime Minister Qarase, chief executive in the prime minister's office Jiogi Kotobalavu and Police Commissioner Hughes went to Wellington after Bainimarama agreed to a meeting (*The Australian*, Nov. 28). With a diplomatic solution in sight, two Fiji politicians, cabinet minister Lekh Ram Vayeshnoi and opposition leader Mick Beddoes, urged police to drop all investigations against the Bainimarama for the sake of political stability (*Fijilive*).

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan warned that more than 500 Fijian soldiers serving in peacekeeping duties in the Middle East would be sent home if the Bainimarama carried out his threat to

oust an elected government in Fiji. The U.N. chief spoke to Prime Minister Qarase on Nov. 28 and refused to take calls from Bainimarama (Fiji TV). The European Union (EU) reaffirmed its support for the Qarase government as the diplomatic corps in Suva attempted without success to talk to senior army officers at the Queen Elizabeth Barracks.

In New Zealand, Bainimarama remained defiant and told Indo-Fijian *Radio Tarana* that his meeting with Qarase would be short (*New Zealand Herald*, Nov. 29). New Zealand's prime Minister, Helen Clark, remained optimistic. However, Bainimarama arrived at the meeting late and had to leave early to catch his flight to Fiji. Despite a two-hour discussion, a solution to the crisis was still not in sight as Qarase called for "good sense to prevail" (*Fiji Village News*). *The Fiji Times* reported that the army would start preparing for a "possible" invasion by Australia by holding military exercises. In a press statement released by military spokesperson Capt. Leweni, the army planned to secure strategic sites within the greater Suva area between midnight and 3 a.m.

Both Bainimarama and Qarase arrived in Fiji in the evening of Nov. 29 and did not make any comments to the media (Fiji TV). At 8:15 p.m., Bainimarama arrived at Nadi International Airport and left through the back gate to the Nadi military camp. Police Commissioner Hughes did not return with Qarase and took leave to be with his family in Australia: "A high-level source told the *Herald* that Mr. Hughes has suffered acute stress as a result of events in Fiji and will not be returning as commissioner" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, Nov. 30).

On Nov. 30, the military announced further exercises in Suva following news of an Australian Black Hawk helicopter crash near Fiji. The army alleged that the Australian Defense Force was planning an invasion from its navy ships (Fijilive). The army alleged that the Forum Foreign Ministers' meeting in Sydney on Dec. 1 would allow Australian intervention under the Biketawa Declaration of 2000.

At 11 a.m., Prime Minister Qarase met with the president and in the afternoon spoke with Vice President Madraiwiwi and F.L.P. leader Chaudhry. At 4:30 p.m., Qarase thanked the New Zealand's Prime Minister Clark, Foreign Minister Winston Peters and Governor General Anand Satyanand for providing support and advice for the meeting between him and the Bainimarama in Wellington on Nov. 29. Qarase requested that the F.M.F. provide evidence against all those involved in the 2000 coup to the police for investigation.

Starting immediately, the Racial Tolerance and Unity, Qoliqoli and Land Claims Tribunal bills are suspended. An independent committee will be formed to determine whether any of the bills contravene the 1997 Constitution ... Qarase said that his government cannot interfere in ongoing investigations against senior members of the army but ... [would support dropping] charges against the army for the sake of national interest. Qarase confirmed that Police Commissioner Andrew Hughes' contract was due to expire soon and [that] any decision to renew it will be based on his performance in the past three years. ... The Ministry of Home Affairs will review the armed Police Tactical Unit. The Native Land Trust Board (N.L.T.B.) will be directed through the Ministry of Fijian Affairs to review its commercial arm: Vanua Development Corporation. Starting immediately, Qarase will start work on leadership code, freedom of information legislation and anticorruption measures. Two Ministers from the Qarase government, Minister for Tourism Tomasi Vuetilovoni and Minister for Foreign Affairs Kaliopate Tavola, will attend the Forum meeting in Sydney on 1 Dec. 1. The two will request the Forum Island Countries (F.I.C.'s) to support New Zealand brokered dialogue between the Fiji government and the army. The United Nations' secretary general spoke to Qarase and has promised assistance for peacefully resolving the political impasse in Fiji. P.M. Qarase will write to Bainimarama and invite him to further talks (Radio Sargam, Nov. 30)

Commodore Bainimarama remained unimpressed. At a press conference in Suva on the evening of Nov. 30, the army commander gave the Qarase government until noon on Dec. 1 to "clean up" his government. Fiji TV, in its 10 p.m. report, stated that the army was ready to takeover and impose military rule. There were also rumors that the army would confiscate the business assets of those involved in the 2000 coup.

The military commander says he will hold the prime minister, the head of his department and the attorney general personally responsible if one of his soldiers is hurt or killed. He is confident the transition — set for one 1 p.m. N.Z.T. — will be peaceful, but there is a fear that if Bainimarama doesn't have the full backing of his men then his declaration could lead to

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bloodshed. Bainimarama's actions have drawn opprobrium from throughout the world (TV NZDec. 1).

New Zealand's Prime Minister Clark and Foreign Minister Peters expressed surprise at Bainimarama's statements, confirmed that discussions brokered by New Zealand were successful and warned Bainimarama not to depose an elected government. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Qarase told ABC that he hoped for "divine intervention" to resolve the crisis. Australian minister for foreign affairs Alexander Downer argued that a military coup would have a negative impact on the entire South Pacific region. At 10 a.m., Bainimarama visited the president and held discussions on the current situation for 40 minutes. He then went to the Post Fiji Stadium where senior army officers were briefed. At 11:30, the University of the South Pacific and a number of businesses closed for the day in the Suva City Business District (Legend FM, Dec. 1).

In another development, Legend FM confirmed that Police Commissioner Hughes had not resigned as earlier alleged by some news reports. Speaking live from Cairns in Northern Queensland, Australia, Hughes explained that the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (D.P.P.) could decide that it is not in the "public interest" to proceed with sedition charges against Bainimarama. Hughes further stated that he was monitoring the situation in Fiji and was scheduled to return on Dec. 18.

At noon, Bainimarama told journalists that since the government had failed to accede to his demands, he assumed that it was now up to him to start the "clean up" process (Radio SargamDec. 1). Meanwhile, Prime Minister Qarase confirmed that he would not resign, following rumors that the New Zealand government had offered him safe haven. Ministers in the Qarase government were taken to undisclosed location for fear of military action (Fijilive).

Prime Minister Clark cast doubt about whether New Zealand would continue making its \$8.7 million a year contribution to Fiji. Worse, the European Union's \$48 million aid was in jeopardy, as was nearly \$12 million in United Nations payments for Fiji's peacekeeping duties overseas (*The New Zealand Herald*, Dec. 2). Following the Forum Foreign Minister's meeting, Australian Foreign Minister Downer, stated that the Australia-Fiji defense cooperation would be suspended, including \$39 million in aid. On Dec. 1, Fiji TV reported that the United States had joined the chorus of protest against any military intervention (CBS News, Dec. 2).

On Saturday, Dec. 2, Vice President Madraiwiwi held separate meetings with Commodore Bainimarama and Prime Minister Qarase (*Fijilive*). Bainimarama remained defiant and told Qarase to resign or be removed. On Dec. 3, one of the options on the table was for Qarase to request the president to dissolve parliament (*Fijilive*). Qarase told Legend FM that a National Security Council meeting would be convened on Dec. 5 to discuss the current impasse. Meanwhile, Bainimarama reiterated that Qarase was no longer the prime minister as of noon, Dec. 1. The ongoing tensions between the army and the government started to hurt the hotel industry and Nadi landowners urged a quick resolution (Legend FM, Dec. 3).

The Fiji Trade Union leaders, Attar Singh and Felix Anthony, requested the army to uphold the constitution and the rule of law. Fijian lawyer Kitone Vuataki, SDL Sen. Tupeni Baba, former president of the Methodist Church Josateki Koroi and Fiji's supervisor of elections Semesa Karavaki expressed support for the elected government (Fiji TVDec. 3). The *New Zealand Herald* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, meanwhile, picked up a story from the *Fiji Daily Post*, which reported that:

Tomorrow [Dec. 4] at 0300 hrs., the capital city is expected to be blockaded by armed soldiers as they begin with the much-awaited clean up ...

The intention is to shut down an effective operation of the Qarase government. Once it is immobilized, grounds for its dismissal will be satisfied. One can also expect interruptions to the telecommunication networks. Sources claim this is one of the scenarios the military is contemplating, there may be well others under consideration.

One mitigating factor in all of this would be the unity of the army and whether it will hold together or split apart with government loyalists versus the commander's rebels, sources said.

Meanwhile, some observers say the struggle for democracy in Fiji has a tribal dimension too with the House of Bau leading the overthrow. This is where the potential for bloodshed is most probable and the world may well see Fiji go the way of the Solomons, Tonga, or worse (Dec. 3).

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Commodore Bainimarama clarified that there would be no army officers in any new interim government. "People that are interested in positions will be asked to apply. Whoever is fit will be part of it. A lot has been said about names of people we have chosen but we have no names in mind," he said. Bainimarama then referred to a time in 2000, when one of his senior officers suggested that he be appointed president: "I said it then and I will say it again, no military officer should and will benefit from the interim administration" (*The Fiji Sun*, Dec. 4).

On Dec. 4, armed soldiers went to the Police Tactical Response Units in Nasinu and Nasova and removed weapons from the armory (Legend FM). Land Forces Commander Driti confirmed that weapons in possession of police were removed so that they would not pose a threat to the military (Fijilive). Meanwhile, some 30 armed soldiers set up a military roadblock at Sawani near the Naitasiri province. At the checkpoint, soldiers disarmed the prime minister's bodyguards. At 3:30 p.m., *The Fiji Daily Post* closed its head office in Suva after reports that it was one of the "targets" in the army's "clean up" campaign.

At night, armed soldiers set up roadblocks throughout Suva and in the west. Prime Minister Qarase's residence was surrounded and he was not allowed to see Vice President Madraiwiwi (Fiji TV). On the morning of Dec. 5, the military tightened its grip on Suva city and confiscated the official vehicles of government ministers (*Fiji Village News*). At 11:30 a.m., Fijilivereported that the President Ratu Josefa Iloilo had dissolved parliament and given the army the go-ahead to take over government. Legend FM contradicted this news when reporter Vijay Narayan read a statement from the president's office at 4 p.m., which stated that "his Excellency neither condones nor supports the actions of the army."

At 6 p.m., Bainimarama assumed executive authority and established a military council to run the affairs of the country with the assistance of Interim Prime Minister Jona Baravilala Senilagakali.

Bainimarama said he had stepped into the shoes of the president and "in this capacity" under Section 101(1) of our Constitution ... [dismissed] Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase.

He said the 1997 Constitution remained intact:

"We reiterate that while this cause of action is taken with great reluctance, it is necessary to steer our beloved nation into peace, stability and just solution and to preserve our Constitution. Therefore the constitution will remain in place except those parts as necessitated under the doctrine of necessity" ...

Bainimarama said the takeover will not be permanent (Fijilive, Dec. 5)

On the evening of Dec. 5, *The Fiji Times* and Fiji TV were warned not to publish any "propaganda" from the deposed prime minister or any of his ministers. Fiji Broadcasting Limited, which operates Radio Fiji stations, including Radio Fiji One, Radio Fiji Two, Radio Fiji Gold and Radio Mirchi, had their evening news contents checked and cleared by the army before going on air (*The Fiji Times*). On Dec. 6, *The Fiji Daily Post* reported that the military was preparing to publish martial law decrees.

At 4:30 a.m. on Dec. 6, Prime Minister Qarase and his family were flown from his official residence in Suva to his home in Lau. That same day, G.C.C. chairman Ratu Ovini Bokini confirmed that the council meeting scheduled for Dec. 12-14 was postponed due to military takeover. Bokini stated that President Iloilo was still the head of state, even though Bainimarama had assumed the powers of the president. Meanwhile, the speaker of the House of Representatives, Pita Nacuva, revealed that he had received no directive from the president on the dissolution of parliament and as far as he was concerned, it was "business as usual" (Legend FM).

At about midday, armed soldiers surrounded the Parliament and detained Nacuva. Also taken into custody were Solicitor General Nainendra Nand and Public Service Commission chairman Stuart Huggett (*Fiji Times*). Acting Police Commissioner Moses Driver was taken by soldiers to the army barracks in Nabua and the Senate was adjourned indefinitely (AAP). The army declared a state of emergency and Bainimarama ordered all soldiers to march into camp so they could be deployed at various strategic locations. Bainimarama said the primary objective of the interim military government was to "take the country forward toward good governance, rid us of corruption and bad practices and, at the same time, promote the well being of Fiji and its people at the earliest possible opportunity" (Fijilive).

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In response to the military takeover, Australia imposed an immediate ban on all travel by senior army officers and their families from Fiji and the Australia-Fiji Defense Cooperation program was suspended indefinitely. Britain, New Zealand and the European Union all imposed similar restrictions and sanctions, with Fiji once again on the brink of losing its membership in the Commonwealth (*Fiji Times*). At 5 p.m. on , Bainimarama swore Senilagakali into office as interim prime minister. At about 9 p.m., soldiers raided the SDL office on McGregor Road and 30 armed soldiers later detained ousted state minister for provincial development Ted Young. He was taken to the Queen Elisabeth Barracks in Nabua for questioning and later released (*The Fiji Sun*, Dec. 7)

Vice President Madraiwiwi was removed from office on Dec. 6 as well, sparking fears that the military had deposed the vice president, who was appointed by the G.C.C. Speaking on Radio Fiji Two, G.C.C. chairman Bokini hoped that Bainimarama would come back to the negotiation table to work with the council in finding a solution to the political mess.

On Dec. 7, the military sacked Police Commissioner Hughes, Public Service Commission (P.S.C.) chairman Stuart Huggett, P.S.C. C.E.O. Anare Jale, prime minister's office C.E.O. Kotobalavu , Solicitor General Nand, Acting Commissioner of Police Moses Driver and Assistant Commissioner of Police Kevueli Bulamainivalu. The military warned that public servants not cooperating with relevant C.E.O.'s will also have their employment terminated (Fijilive).

The newly appointed interim prime minister, Senilagakali, gave an interview on ABC Radio and requested Australia and New Zealand not to interfere in the political situation. Senilagakali defended the takeover of the government as the only way to implement a corruption-free administration and to heal racial wounds caused by the previous three coups. Australian minister for foreign affairs Downer argued that the coup was an attempt by Commodore Bainimarama to scuttle investigations into the death of four rebel soldiers, who were supposedly "murdered" by soldiers loyal to the commander, following an attack on the army barracks in November 2000 (*The Australian*).

Fiji has had three military coups since independence from Britain in 1970. The first, on May 14, 1987, deposed the multiethnic government of Timoci Bavadra. Following the takeover, coup leader Lt. Col. Sitiveni Rabuka established a military council, abrogated the 1970 constitution and imposed martial law. On Sept. 25, Rabuka deposed the governor general and declared Fiji a republic. By December, an interim government was established under the leadership of Ratu Mara and Ratu Penaia Ganilau.

In 2000, George Speight, with the support of members of the army's Counter Revolutionary Warfare Unit abducted the Peoples' Coalition government and held ministers hostage in Parliament for 56 days. George Speight's group argued that the government of Indo-Fijian Prime Minister Chaudhry was implementing policies detrimental to indigenous Fijians. Similar arguments were made by Rabuka in 1987.

This time around, the Dec. 5 coup was executed by army commander Bainimarama, who was involved in a five-year fight with the SDL over moves to bring Speight supporters into the government. Moreover, the tensions between the army and the government were further fueled by three controversial bills, the Racial Tolerance and Unity, Qoliqoli and Land Claims Tribunal bills, which were seen by the army as a threat to national security. Bainimarama usurped power by deposing President Iloilo and invoking the "doctrine of necessity" that had also allowed military intervention in Thailand and Pakistan.

As in previous coups, there are concerns that this one may not have support of the *vanua* (Fijian people). In 1987, Rabuka had their support ,and some sections of the community supported George Speight in 2000. Fiji's Council of Chiefs has come out strongly against the takeover, placing Bainimarama in a difficult and potentially dangerous situation. If there is a mass uprising of Fijians against the army, the coup may collapse as soldiers refuse to violently subdue popular protest.